



Waratah Local Centre Upgrade

Stage 1 Consultation Report

December 2022

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1. Executive Summary

On 29 June 2021, the elected Council of City of Newcastle agreed to carry out the renewal of Waratah Local Centre. The first step in the renewal process is the development of a draft Public Domain Plan (PDP) for the Local Centre zone within Waratah. Community input regarding values, issues and priorities is needed to inform the development of a draft Public Domain Plan.

This report covers the first stage of engagement prior to the development of a draft PDP. Once a draft PDP has been developed a second stage of engagement will take place. The draft PDP, once developed, will be placed on public exhibition for comment and further community feedback before the PDP is finalised. This process will be covered by a separate report.

The purpose of the first stage of community engagement was to understand the community's concerns, values and priorities; get information necessary to develop a PDP that resolves safety and usage conflicts; identify what problems need to be resolved by the PDP; provide a mandate for changes proposed in a draft PDP; and identify community stakeholders who can be part of ongoing placemaking in Waratah.

The level of engagement for this project was to inform and consult the community. The primary activity was an online survey. Community members were also able to provide comments via email or by mail. During the engagement period, CN received 320 completed online surveys and 10 written submissions.

The survey and submission findings showed that there is strong support for the planned upgrade of Waratah Town Centre. Across the large number of responses, feedback was predominately constructive and specifically mentioned supporting the upgrade or identified the area as having potential.

The highest priority aspects of the local centre that the community would like to **see improved** were:

- The 'look and feel' of the area
- Pedestrian safety, access and connectivity
- Street trees

The top four things respondents **valued** in the Waratah local centre were:

- Location, accessibility and proximity
- Businesses, shops and services
- Family and community oriented
- Train and public transport accessibility

The potential of the area for improvement was also highly valued by respondents.

The top four things respondents would most like to **see more of** were:

- Businesses and shops
- Pedestrian safety, access and footpath improvements
- Trees and plants
- Aesthetic improvements to the look and feel

Removal of some parking spaces was supported by the majority of respondents, as it was generally felt that there was adequate parking in Station Street. Concerns about parking were primarily

focused on the area around St Phillips School, and during the peak visitation times for the childcare centres and schools.

The feedback will be used to help develop a draft public domain plan.

2. Background

On 29 June 2021, the elected Council of City of Newcastle agreed to carry out the renewal of Waratah Local Centre. The first step in the renewal process is the development of a draft Public Domain Plan (PDP) for the Local Centre zone within Waratah. Community input regarding values, issues and priorities is needed to inform the development of a draft Public Domain Plan. A communication and engagement plan was developed to support the community engagement activities required to inform and consult the community about the development of a PDP.

This report covers the first stage of engagement prior to the development of a draft PDP. Once a draft PDP has been developed a second stage of engagement will take place. The draft PDP, once developed, will be placed on public exhibition for comment and further community feedback before the PDP is finalised. This process will be covered by a separate report.

3. Engagement objectives

The purpose of the first stage of community engagement was to:

- understand the community's concerns, values and priorities
- get information necessary to develop a PDP that resolves safety and usage conflicts
- identify what problems need to be resolved by the PDP
- provide a mandate for changes proposed in a draft PDP
- identify community stakeholders who can be part of ongoing placemaking in Waratah

4. Engagement activities

The level of engagement for this project was to inform and consult the community. The primary activity was an online survey. The survey asked questions relating to:

- priorities for improvements to the area
- what is most valued about the Waratah Local Centre
- what people would like to see more of
- sentiment regarding changes to parking





The community were invited to complete the online survey between 23 May to 13 June 2022. A copy of the survey questions can be found in **Appendix II: Online survey questionnaire**.

Community members were also able to provide comments via email or by mail.

5. Communication and promotion

During the engagement period, a communications campaign was implemented to raise awareness of the opportunity to provide input on upgrades to Waratah Local Centre.

Key communications activities are summarised on the following page, and key pieces of communications collateral are available in Appendix I.

Channel	Description	Reach
 Have Your Say webpage	A dedicated project webpage was created on CN's Have Your Say landing page. The page aimed to provide information and raise awareness about the proposed Waratah Local Centre upgrade.	2,425 page views
 Flyers and onsite signage	<p>Flyers were distributed to Waratah residents.</p> <p>Onsite signage was also installed at key locations in Waratah.</p>	n/a
 Social media	The survey was promoted via a paid post on CN's Facebook page that went live on 23 May 2022. The paid post intended to raise awareness and encourage people to have their say.	23,032 reached 1,138 link clicks
 Newsletters	Information about the Waratah Local Centre upgrade survey was also published in the dedicated May Have Your Say EDM.	Distributed to 2,429 subscribers

6. Key findings

During the survey period CN received:

- 320 completed online surveys
- 10 written submissions

The survey results and a summary of written submissions are outlined in this section.

A copy of the survey questions can be found in **Appendix II: Online survey questionnaire**.

6.1. Demographics

The majority of the 320 respondents (96%) were residents of the Newcastle local government area (LGA). More than half of the survey respondents (56%) live in the suburb of Waratah, followed by Mayfield (10%), Georgetown (6%) and Waratah West (4%). A summary of the suburbs where respondents live is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of suburbs where respondents live (N=320)

Suburbs where respondents live	Percent
Waratah	56%
Mayfield	10%
Georgetown	6%
Waratah West	4%
Other suburbs within the Newcastle LGA	20%
Outside the Newcastle LGA (e.g. Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland)	4%

Two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents were female and 32% were male. 2% identified as other or preferred not to say.

Slightly more than one-third of respondents were aged under 35 (36%), with the highest proportion of responses from 35-44 year olds (34%).

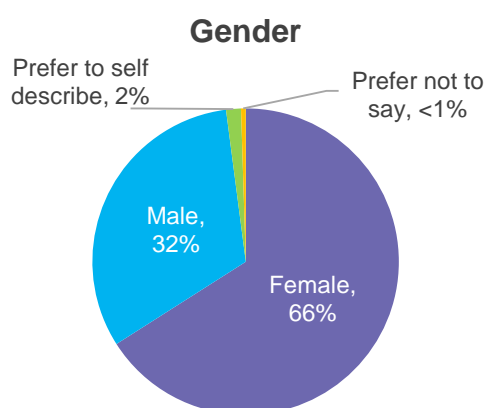


Figure 1. Gender (N=320)

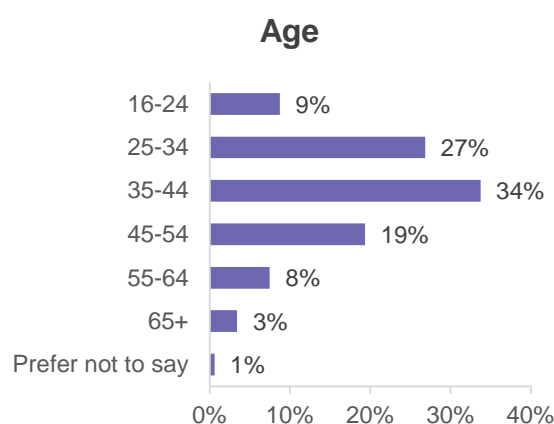


Figure 2. Age (N=320)

6.2. Prioritising improvements to the area

Q: Please rank in order of priority the following aspects of your neighbourhood centre that you would most like to see improved. (rank 1 = highest priority, 9 = lowest priority)

Respondents were asked to place a list of nine aspects of the neighbourhood into priority order with one being the highest priority and nine being the lowest priority. The rankings for each of the nine neighbourhood aspects are shown in Figure 3, sorted by the proportion of respondents who ranked each aspect the highest priority.

The aspect of the neighbourhood centre that was ranked the **highest priority** (rank 1) by the most respondents (47%) was the **'look and feel of the area'**. This aspect also received the third highest number of second priority (18%) rankings. As shown in Figure 3, the aspect with the second highest number of priority one rankings was **'pedestrian safety, access and connectivity'** (23%).

The aspect of the neighbourhood that ranked as the **lowest priority** (rank 9) by the most respondents was **'parking times and zones'** (29%) followed by **'drainage'** (27%).

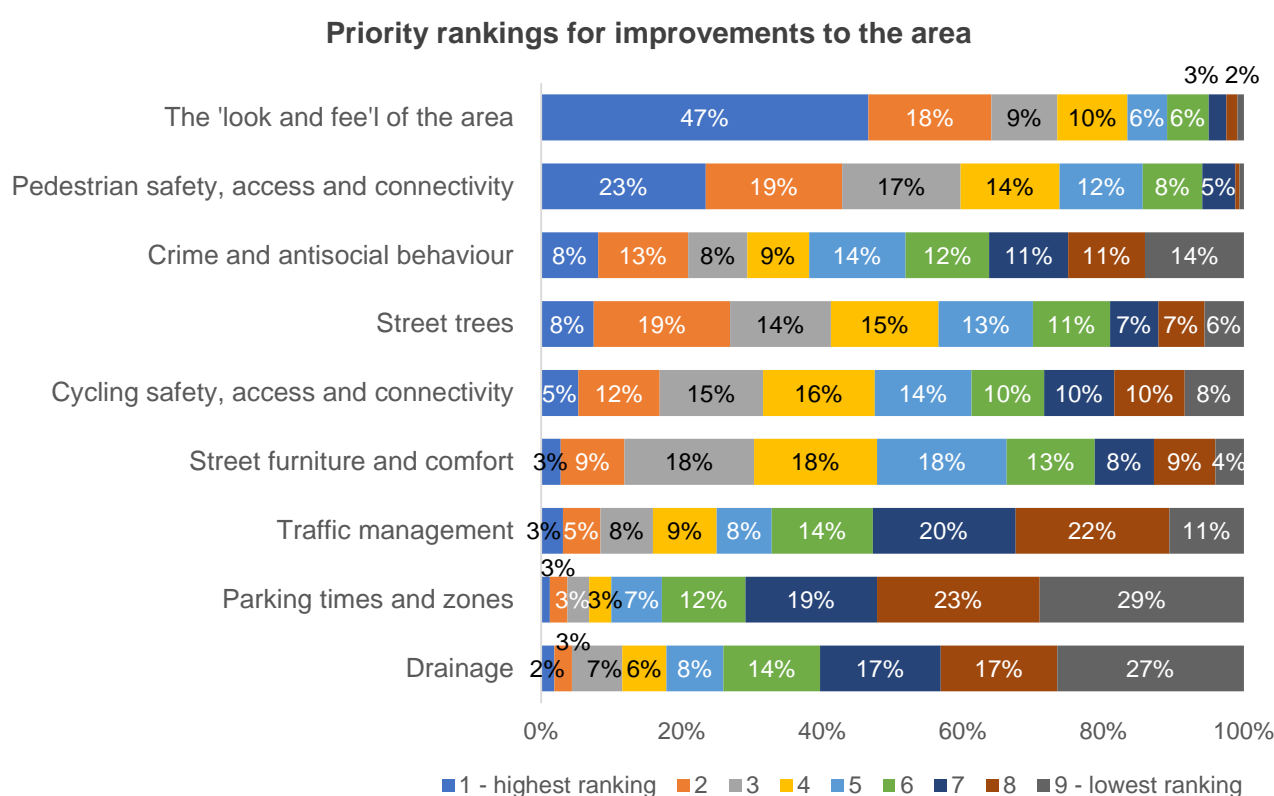


Figure 3. Priority order rankings of aspects of neighbourhood you want most to see improved (sorted by 1st priority) (n=320). Note: data labels <2% are not shown on the chart above.